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REMARKS

Applicants have amended claims 1, 2, 12, and 20. Claims 1-23 are presently pending in the application.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Paul Kim for his thorough search and review of the prior-art, his careful consideration and examination of the present application and claims, and his indication that claim 2 contains allowable subject matter. In particular, the Examiner stated that claim 2 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Office Action rejected claims 1 and 3-23 on prior art. Regarding these rejections, claims 1 and 3-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ridolfo (U.S. Patent No. 5,702,980) in view of Perala (U.S. Publication No. 2003/0217894).

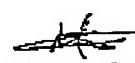
Since independent claims 1, 12, and 20 have been amended with the allowable subject matter of claim 2, Applicants submit that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are now moot, and request that this rejection be withdrawn. In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, it is respectfully submitted that each and every objection and rejection has been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is thus requested.

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Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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